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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DAKAR 000572

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR AF/W, AF/S, AND AF/RSA

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ZI](#) [SF](#) [SG](#) [UK](#)

SUBJECT: SENEGAL AGREES WITH SOUTH AFRICA ON ZIMBABWE

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires a.i. Kevin Mullally for reasons 1.5 B/
[1D](#).

[11](#). (C) Summary: Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade sent his Foreign Minister on May 1 to Harare to urge Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe to allow the electoral commission to release March 29 election results and to accept the outcome. According to Momar Gueye, the Foreign Ministry's director of African and Asian Affairs, President Wade believes that President Mugabe should be encouraged to respect human rights and democracy and to accept the results of the March 29 elections but he should not be "humiliated." Moreover, applying too much public pressure would likely backfire and result in more violence. Senegal believes Mugabe's acceptance of the need for a run-off is a significant concession. Senegal and South Africa's views are largely convergent, according to Gueye. End summary.

[12](#). (C) On May 7, the MFA Director of the African and Asian Affairs Division Gueye told Political Counselor that Foreign Minister Cheikh Tidiane Gadio delivered a strong private message from Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade to President Mugabe encouraging the government to respect democracy and human rights. According to Gueye, although Wade respects Mugabe's history as an independence freedom fighter, he made it clear to Mugabe that it is essential that the results of the March 29 elections be released and that Mugabe accept the outcome, as was noted in Foreign Ministry press release (a copy of which was sent to AF/W by email). However, Gueye emphasized that Wade, who he characterized as a "true pan-Africanist," does not want to see Mugabe be humiliated by the West, given all that he has done. Moreover, Senegal believes that putting more public pressure on Mugabe is likely to backfire, and that pushing him into a corner would lead to more violence.

[13](#). (C) Although he acknowledged that Presidents Wade and Thabo Mbeki of South Africa have had a tense relationship in the past as a result of Wade taking umbrage at Mbeki's mediation efforts in the Ivory Coast, in Senegal's "back yard," Gueye said the two presidents' views were now largely convergent. He reported that during Foreign Minister Gadio's meeting with President Mbeki on his way back from Zimbabwe the two sides had agreed that the best way forward was for all parties concerned to urge both the GOZ and the opposition to accept the results of the March 29 elections as determined by the country's electoral commission.

[14](#). () Although Gueye conceded that the long delay between the election and the announcement of the results could cause some observers to question the credibility of outcome, he emphasized that the Southern African Development Community (SADC) had verified that the election was essentially free and fair and noted that Senegal had not participated in any electoral observation and was therefore not in a position to

judge. Moreover, he questioned what would be the point of allowing the opposition to take control of the parliament if President Mugabe intended to overturn the presidential election result.

15. (C) Guey opined that Senegal's efforts ad the Senegalese/South African view were vindicated by subsequent release of the March 29 results by Zimbabwe's election. He contended that Mugabe's acceptance of the need for a run-off election was a significant concession, given that Mugabe previously said he would never accept such an outcome. Gueye said, "This result is "very humiliating for Mugabe. Now we have to see if (opposition leader Morgan) Tsvigirai will accept the result."

Comment

16. (C) President Wade clearly sees the Zimbabwe mission of his foreign minister as an unalloyed success and believes that it adds to his stature as a pan-Africanist statesman, hence the press release. As we have noted before, Wade sees himself as being an African leader of the first rank and resents what he sees as President Mbeki's efforts to make South Africa into the continent's superpower. It appears that Wade is returning the favor with Mbeki by helping him to resolve crisis in South Africa's "backyard." However, President Wade is in over his head. It is clear that the Senegalese Foreign Ministry knows next to nothing about the conflict in Zimbabwe beyond what it reads in the press. Senegal does not have an embassy in Harare and the MFA has in the past asked for information from Post about the situation in Zimbabwe. These latest efforts at mediation are only the

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most recent example of Wade's desire to be seen as Africa's indispensable peace maker. Finally, while Wade no doubt is sincere in his belief that Africans should handle African problems, he also no doubt believes that diplomatic "coups" abroad improve his standing at home as well.

Background

17. (U) President Wade announced that he was going to take on the role of mediator in a press conference (to which he convoked the entire diplomatic corps) in October of 2007. During the press conference he was very critical of President Mbeki's handling of the crisis in Zimbabwe. Wade said that he would facilitate an agreement between Mugabe and British Prime Minister Gordon Brown. President Wade went to Harare in November 2007 to meet with Mugabe. He attended a state dinner during which he gave a long address announcing that the origin of Zimbabwe's problems was the so-called British refusal to pay for land reform as agreed at the end of the independence war. Wade praised Mugabe as an African hero. Subsequently, during the African Union/European Union heads-of-state summit, Wade vocally defended Mugabe.
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